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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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Ladies, Gentlemen, and Otherwise, welcome to the first edition of *The Phoenix Papers*. This journal, intended as a forum for work on fandom and neomedia studies, has been a long time coming. For my own part, it is the natural consequence of fifteen years of work with the convention known as A-Kon. They are our sponsors for this journal and indeed for our upcoming Fandom and Neomedia Studies (FANS) Conference in June. Through this organization, I have had more opportunities to meet and work with some of the greatest minds in these fields than would have otherwise been possible. For that I am personally grateful to Meri Davis, A-Kon Chairman, and all the rest of the A-Kon family.

More broadly, this journal reflects the efforts of a small, dedicated group of fan-scholars (or scholar-fans, there is still some debate as to which term is more appropriate) who have made this possible. Namely, these are Helen McCarthy, Michael Vandehey, Brett Burkett, Shannon Burkett, and Jonathan Davis. Each has contributed his or her special talents and energies to this effort. I would also like to thank our contributors, who, after all, are the people giving voice to their thoughts and work within our pages.

Our little group is dedicated to the study of all manner of fandom and neomedia phenomena wherever, whenever they may occur. Fandom includes all aspects of being a fan ranging from mere passive consumption to active participation in creating new fan texts. The term *text*, much like *reading*, is construed in the widest possible sense. Anything from which meaning can be derived, or to which it can be ascribed, is a text worthy of fandom considerations. Neomedia includes not only new media, but traditional media thought of or used in new ways. Again, *media* is broadly understood to include any method whereby information can be communicated from one person to another. In most cases within these pages, both of these categories will focus on mass or popular culture elements, but we tend to take a relaxed attitude. We are, after all, fans, and we want to have fun while we do this. Just as important, we want you, the reader, to enjoy the contents as you are informed of new research and theory in fandom and neomedia studies.

We encourage you to send in comments and questions regarding these articles, and to contribute to future editions. Our format is also still experimental. This edition has each article as its own downloadable PDFW but we may evolve to having just one file for future editions. We look forward to reader commentary on all aspects of our work. You might also want to look over our [Popular Culture Resources for Educators, Librarians, Parents, and Fans](#), a sort of bibliography we are working on to help scholars in our fields get started. This is an ongoing project so be sure to check back for occasional updates, and we hope to expand it to a proper annotated listing in due time. We also sponsor internships, [assist research](#) through access to A-Kon's fan base, and host an annual [conference](#). We are still very much an experiment in some ways, but then, fandom has always been that way.

So, gentle readers, thank you again for your attention, and we look forward to hearing from you for future editions of *The Phoenix Papers*.

– J. Holder Bennett, MA

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Mission Statement:

Our mission is to encourage the study of fans through their interactions with neomedia. We understand neomedia to refer to both new media, as well as traditional media that is being used or interpreted in new ways. The study of fandom has implications for studies ranging from Economics to Political Science, and from History to Anthropology, and so we believe it should be better studied to further all areas of academic progress.

Vision Statement:

Our vision is to encourage, assist, and publish research on fandom and neomedia studies.